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TO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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TAGS: P-FOR

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF US CONTRIBUTION TO NATO EXPERTS
WORKING GROUP ON USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE

FOR: MR. MATUSEK

I. POLITICAL OUTLOOK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE

1. SOVIET DETENTE DIPLOMACY HAS ENCOUNTERED SOME BUFFETING IN RECENT MONTHS. THE PROGRESSIVE EXPANSION OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE WEST HAS MADE MOSCOW MORE VULNERABLE TO WESTERN CONCERNS OVER THE STATE OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES IN THE USSR, AS REFLECTED IN THE FUROR OVER THE SOVIET CRACKDOWN ON DOMESTIC DISSIDENTS, THE DEBATE OVER MFN AND CREDITS FOR THE SOVIET UNION IN THE US, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THE SECOND STAGE OF THE CSCE IN GENEVA. NEVERTHELESS, THE SOVIETS ARE CONTINUING TO PRESS FORWARD, LED BY GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV, WHO HAS DEVOTED AN IMPRESSIVE SHARE OF HIS TIME TO PURSUING DETENTE GOALS ABROAD AND DEFENDING THEM AT HOME.

2. THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS PROVIDED A TESTING GROUND FOR
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SOVIET DETENTE POLICIES AND ITS NEW IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN CONTRAST TO 1967,

MOSCOW'S BEHAVIOR DURING THE CRISIS WAS CHARACTERIZED

BY A SERIOUS EFFORT TO CONTAIN CONFRONTATION ASPECTS WITH THE US, EVEN THOUGH THE MASSIVE SOVIET RESUPPLY OPERATION FOR THE ARABS COMPLICATED EFFORTS TO TERMINATE HOSTILITIES.

3. PROMPT US EXCHANGES WITH THE SOVIET UNION FAILED TO FORESTALL THIS MOVE. OBVIOUSLY, THE SOVIETS WEIGHED THEIR INTERESTS AND CONCLUDED THAT THE IMPERATIVES OF THEIR POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST REQUIRED THEM TO RISK DAMAGING DETENTE AND TO STRAIN RELATIONS WITH THE US. TO MINIMIZE THIS RISK, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS TOOK DELIBERATE STEPS TO PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON THEIR MOVES. SOVIET RHETORIC MUTED DIRECT CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES. AND THERE WERE NUMEROUS SIGNALS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, THAT THE MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES, WHILE EXTREMELY SERIOUS, NEED NOT AND SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE, SOVIET ACTIONS WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS FOR MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN US-SOVIET SUMMIT AGREEMENTS, AND THEY REFLECTED MOSCOW'S EVIDENT DESIRE TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FRUITS OF DETENTE THAT MOSCOW HOPES TO SECURE FROM THE WEST.

4. THE CRISIS BEGAN WITH MOSCOW'S POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD IN A TENUOUS STATE. UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN, BUT THE SOVIETS HAVE ACHIEVED IMPORTANT GAINS. THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS IN A CRISIS WHICH HAS ENCOURAGED EFFECTIVE USE OF ARAB OIL AS A POLITICAL WEAPON AGAINST THE US, WESTERN EUROPE, AND JAPAN. THEY SAW DEMONSTRATED THE HIGH QUALITY OF SOVIET WEAPONS, MILITARY TRAINING, AND LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES. AND THEY SECURED VIVID EVIDENCE OF THE VULNERABILITIES OF WESTERN ALLIANCE TO THE DIVERGENT INTERESTS OF ITS MEMBERS.

5. HOW SUCCESSFUL THE SOVIETS PROVE TO BE IN CONSOLIDATING
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THEIR POSITION WITH THE ARABS WILL DEPEND NOT ONLY ON SHIFTING ARAB PERCEPTIONS OF THE DEGREE OF SOVIET SUPPORT BUT ALSO ON THE COURSE OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT. BUT MOSCOW HAS SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLOIT.

6. ALTHOUGH REDUCED TEMPORARILY TO SECONDARY STATUS BY THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, RIVALRY WITH THE PRC REMAINS THE USSR'S MOST INTRACTABLE PROBLEM -- AN OBSTACLE TO FIRM SOVIET CONTROL OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND TO THE EXTENSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN MANY AREAS OF THE WORLD. AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF INTENSIFIED POLEMICS AND THIRD-WORLD MANEUVERINGS, THE SOVIETS IN RECENT

MONTHS HAVE MIXED OFFERS OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO DISCREDIT PEKING'S POLICIES AND SOCIALIST CREDENTIALS. WITH NEITHER SIDE EVIDENTLY PREPARED TO MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS, EACH IS CONTINUING TO SEEK NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ISOLATE THE OTHER, WITH MOSCOW POSSIBLY LOOKING TOWARD A RENEWED WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE AS A MEANS TO THIS END.

7. IN ASIA GENERALLY THE SOVIETS HAVE PURSUED THE OBJECTIVE OF EXPANDING THEIR PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE FROM AFGHANISTAN TO JAPAN. THEY REVIVED AND EXPANDED THEIR ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROPOSAL, BUT ACHIEVED LITTLE SUCCESS IN SELLING THIS PAN-ASIAN INITIATIVE, DUE IN LARGE MEASURE TO RESOLUTE CHINESE OPPOSITION AND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF OTHER ASIAN POWERS TO LINK THEMSELVES TO THIS SOVIET-INSPIRED GAMBIT. WHILE WORKING TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS IN NUMEROUS ASIAN COUNTRIES, THEY HAVE SINGLED OUT JAPAN AND INDIA FOR SPECIAL EFFORTS APPROPRIATE TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL UTILITY FOR SOVIET PURPOSES. STILL WELL-PLACED IN INDIA DESPITE MRS. GANDHI'S EFFORTS TO AVOID OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH SOVIET GOALS, THE SOVIETS ARE FINDING JAPAN A TOUGH AND SUSPICIOUS BARGAINER, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY TANAKA'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IN OCTOBER. MINIMAL PROGRESS IS BEING REGISTERED ON POLITICAL ISSUES WHILE ECONOMIC RELATIONS EXPAND STEADILY BUT WITHOUT THE QUANTUM JUMPS THE SOVIETS SEEK IN SIBERIAN INVESTMENTS.

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8. CONSOLIDATION OF BREZHNEV'S PRE-EMINENT POSITION IN THE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT ON THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS. HIS HEAVY IDENTIFICATION WITH DETENTE, HOWEVER, COULD PROVE TO BE A TWO-EDGED SWORD, GIVING HIM THE INITIATIVE ON ISSUES OF PEACE AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BUT COMPLICATING HIS LEADERSHIP SHOULD CONCRETE BENEFITS MATERIALIZE TOO SLOWLY OR CONCESSIONS TO THE WEST AROUSE FURTHER QUESTIONING OF DETENTE POLICY. HIS TENURE FOR THE PRESENT APPEARS ASSURED, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, AND RESULTING STRAINS ON DETENTE, HAVE PRODUCED SPLITS IN THE KREMLIN LEADERSHIP.
9. THE PARTY EFFORT TO REPRESS DISSIDENTS AND COUNTER ALLEGED WESTERN IDEOLOGICAL SUBVERSION ATTENDANT ON DETENTE FALTERED IN THE EARLY AUTUMN WHEN SAKHAROV MANAGED TO DRAMATIZE THE PLIGHT OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS. UNABLE TO DEAL AS ARBITRAIRLY WITH HIM AS WITH LESS PROMINENT DISSIDENTS, THE SOVIETS HAVE TRIED SPORADICALLY TO IGNORE HIM IN THE HOPES THAT WORLD CRITICISM WILL EVENTUALLY SUBSIDE AND THAT HE WILL REMAIN ISOLA-

TED FROM THE SMALL FRAGMENTED DISSIDENT COMMUNITY. THIS
"CONCESSION" TO DETENTE IS NONETHELESS SIGNIFICANT, AS
ARE SUCH ACTIONS AS CONTINUATION OF JEWISH EMIGRATION
AND CESSATION OF SOME WEST

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